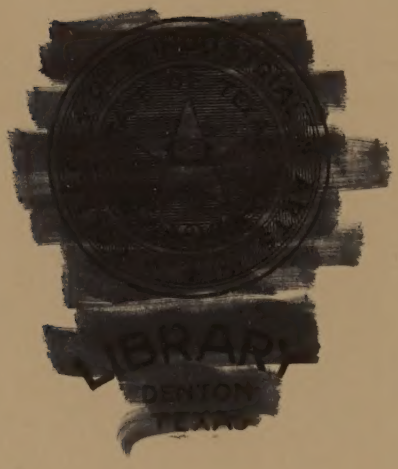
RAGAMUFFINS

Sketches and Verses

BY

DOROTHY, LADY STANLEY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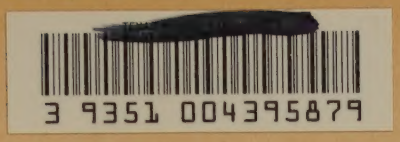

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RAGAMUFFINS

RAGAMUFFINS

TWENTY-FOUR
DRAWINGS AND VERSES
BY
DOROTHY, LADY STANLEY

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In Memoriam

DOROTHY, LADY STANLEY

So loving, so gracious, so beloved!

Who entered into the joy of her Lord,

5th October, 1926

45327

SOUVENIR D'AMOUR

BEFORE the memorable occasion of her marriage in Westminster Abbey to the illustrious STANLEY, who not merely "discovered Livingstone," and the true sources of the Congo and of the Nile, and various other things, but was the means, in the hands of Providence, which finally crushed the power of Arab Slave-raiders, with all its horrors, and introduced European civilization into Central Africa, and the first Christian missions into Uganda,

DOROTHY TENNANT, second daughter of the late Charles Tennant, M.P. for St. Albans, had made a name for herself as an artist, and, by reason of her intense personal charm and versatile intellect, enjoyed the close friendship of the most outstanding figures in the social, political, scientific, literary, artistic, and dramatic life of her time. As one of the inner circle, Sir Sidney Low, recently expressed it: "She was profoundly attracted by any worthy and honourable work. . . . We shall not look upon her like again! Her friendship is a precious memory to those who were fortunate to have enjoyed it."

Lady Stanley, who studied under Sir Edward Poynter, Bt., P.R.A., at the Slade School, and then under Henner and others in Paris, contributed many notable pictures to various London and Provincial Exhibitions, and examples of her work remain in the permanent Galleries at home and abroad. In addition, she made a large number of black-and-white drawings, and illustrated not a few books, amongst these being Dorothea Slade's delightfully written *Gutter-Babies*, published by Heinemann, and a drawing occurs in *Rosemary*, the "Not Forgotten" Association's Appeal, by many distinguished writers, published in 1924 by Sampson Low.

Lady Stanley also possessed a wide knowledge of, and a wonderful memory for, literature and poetry, both French and English, and literary gifts of a high order, quite unsuspected by her world until the appearance of *The Autobiography of Henry M. Stanley*, which she edited and completed from unpublished sources, and that clever and most amusing *jeux d'esprit, Miss Pim's Camouflage*, a War

story which, published early in 1918, created such welcome merriment at the Front, that a re-issue now would certainly achieve as great a success.

His First Offence, in the Tate Gallery, must be familiar to everyone. This was selected for the first of a series of Articles on *Famous Pictures and their Story,* commencing in *Great Thoughts* in October, 1925, by Mr. E. W. Walters, who remarks that: "To what extent this picture has been instrumental in hastening the brighter conditions of to-day cannot, of course, be stated definitely; but there can be no doubt that Lady Stanley's work has done much to awaken the conscience of mankind. She had an intensely sympathetic nature. . . . Where other people saw only a ragged urchin, she saw a lovable child, 'stamped with the Divine Image,' capable of noble deeds and great achievements; and her touch as a painter was as quick and sensitive as her spiritual vision. With a glance she saw the good and the beautiful in the most unpromising material, and with quick, unerring touch, she conveyed her uplifting impression to the canvas."

Apropos of an Obituary Notice by the Rt. Hon. T. P. O'Connor, M.P., appearing in the *Sunday Times,* 10th October, 1926, Mr. John G. Millais, the eminent Sportsman, Naturalist, Artist, and Author, who had known Lady Stanley well from an early age, referring to the fact that she had sat for the picture "NO!" by his father, Sir John Everett Millais, Bart., P.R.A., and commenting on the Notice, remarks: "All that you say of dear Dolly Tennant understates her delightful character. She had a great understanding of children, and we all loved her."

In one of her Private Journals, written in her 'teens, there is a very touching passage in which she expresses her ardent desire to become a great Artist, "as she would like to devote the money earned in bettering young children." Three days later she writes: "I really feel that the only earnest work that can lay before me is in drawing. I might make money in that way; and with that money I might help great distress. I might better the wretched, ignorant minds of the poor little children I see crawling about; I

might do some share in the great work of our Christian Society, as *Ecce Homo* calls it."

Lady Stanley, so tenderly considerate, so gracious, and so altogether lovable that none could help being in love with her, died on the 5th October, 1926, to the great grief of her many friends, in all, even amongst the very humblest, ranks of society, on both sides of the Atlantic, and in South Africa.

During what proved, alas! to be the last two years of her life here, she made the twenty-four drawings in sepia-wash comprising the unique Collection now reproduced; and, during her last few months, she wrote the verses which accompany each sketch.

She regarded these drawings as amongst the best she had ever done; and the reproductions, while naturally handicapped by inherent technical difficulties, are yet so excellent as to convey more than a suggestion of the delicate charm everywhere so evident in the originals.

Artists will appreciate these sketches for their movement and composition, and people who care for joyous scenes of street children will delight in them, as depicted by one who created this genre, and remains its most distinguished exponent. On the 5th September, 1926, exactly one month before the end came, she wrote: "The Public dearly loves a Ragamuffin, especially if he is a cheerful one"; and it must be conceded that most of the scenes portrayed in the present Collection are characterized by cheerfulness.

It would be altogether a misunderstanding to suppose that these drawings and appropriate verses were addressed, primarily or chiefly, to children. On the contrary, as in the case of *His First Offence,* they form an appeal to that humane sense which is characteristic of the English-speaking people all over the world, and to the finer emotions of the more civilized races of mankind everywhere.

The portrait by Millais as "No!" to which allusion has previously been made, was engraved by Samuel Cousins, R.A. These engravings were sold in the streets all over London on the occasion of Dorothy Tennant's marriage

with her hero, Stanley. There is another famous portrait of her by G. F. Watts, R.A., now in the Tate Gallery, in which she is seen holding a favourite squirrel in her hand. Friant also made a very successful portrait of her, in 1888, emerging through the curtains from her Studio into her "Den," at 2, Richmond Terrace, Whitehall.

Best of all, in the view of the present writer, is the painting made when she was a dear little girl of eight, and a very young eight, too !—just brimming over with Life and Love, *vera effigies* of her beautiful character throughout her sojourn here. Endowed with remarkable energy, and that most enviable gift of the Gods, intellectual curiosity, and a great and understanding sympathy for Humanity, she yet retained to the last the heart of a child, with a most engaging, almost child-like freshness of outlook on life.

And of such is the Kingdom of Heaven !

REDIIT AD DEUM SPIRITUS. MANET AMOR. MANET EXEMPLUM. MANET SPES.
SED SEMPER AMOR !

H.J.C.

Christmas, 1929.

The armorial ensigns used as an embellishment to the cover were granted by the College of Arms to Capt. Denzil Morton Stanley, 14th Hussars, retired, who succeeded, as heir, to the Furze Hill estate, Pirbright, Surrey, "in allusion to and commemorative of the important services rendered by Sir Henry Morton Stanley, G.C.B., M.P., D.C.L., LL.D., etc., by his discoveries in Central Africa, where he explored the Sources of the Congo and the Nile, and the African Lakes, and discovered and opened up to British trade and influence large portions of Territory which had previously been unexplored."

The Central African shield and natives' heads were sketched by Lady Stanley. The wavy lines form the heraldic device for a river, and are intended to represent the Congo.

The markings on the Map indicate the localities of some of the chief discoveries alluded to in the College of Arms Grant.

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THE SERPENTINE

TO cast off work-day clothes, unlace
The heavy hob-nailed shoe;
Across the soft green grass to race,
Then plunge into the blue
Chill waters of the Serpentine;
A boy without a care,
Plunge, and then rise, in full sunshine,
With diamonds in his hair.

No longer ragamuffins these,
Just out to recreate;
But joyous Gods, taking their ease
After Olympian state.
Lo! Young Apollo stands erect
A God without a peer!
And there his snow-white limbs reflect
In waters cool and clear.

Narcissus, flinging back his hair,
Kneels in a grassy cove,
Entranced by beauty mirrored there,
His face aflame with love.
Then see young Hermes on the sands,
His heavenly limbs all bare:
Lightly he walks upon his hands,
His wing'd feet poised in air.

And Eros, waggish wanton boy,
Emerging from the lake,
True son of Venus, rosy, coy,
A trickey little rake.
Upon the bank he sits and dries
His curly golden hair,
And then, repeatedly he tries
To shoot you unaware.

Immortal Youth! Eternal Joy!
Are these not gifts divine;
Renewed in every happy boy,
Beside the Serpentine?

THE JEALOUS CHILD

A RONDEAU

AH! love me, too! Ah! love me more!
Love me as once you loved, before
That horrid little baby came,
To whom you gave my Father's name.
If he would go, you could restore
The happiness we knew before.
And if you keep him, I am sure
Nothing can ever be the same.
Ah! love me, too!

THE JEALOUS CHILD
Dorothy Stanley 1925

PLAYING AT MOTHERS

A CROWD of amateur mothers with a real live baby apiece,
One that can yell if you slap it, and will certainly cry if you tease.
But you're not really playing at mothers, unless you comfort or rock
The babies who won't stop crying, and wipe off their tears with their frock.

There's a tiresome type of baby who wants to go off on his own,
To explore a delightful gutter, or play with a curious stone.
Some amateur mothers consider babes can only be good when asleep.
This, of course, is a great delusion; and, anyhow, you can't keep
Them all in continuous slumber. It's the greatest mistake to reprove
A remarkably active baby, because he is anxious to move.
Try lifting him up, and go running till his petticoats swell in the breeze.
This always delights the babies: or go down on your hands and knees,
And growl like a bear, or a lion, this gives them a thrill of fear;
But when you rise up, it passes, and the wicked wild beasts disappear.

Still, real mothers are best on the whole; they know what the babies need.
They know when he's tired or hungry, when he wants to sleep or to feed.
These strange little ragamuffins are much given to struggle and strife;
But just like all other babies, are the plague and the joy of life.

KISS THE PLACE TO MAKE IT WELL

"OH mother, take this hurt away,
Your lips will ease the pain.
"I'll sit with you, I will not play,
"For I might fall again."

The place was kissed, she made it well;
But who can ever guess
The secret of that magic spell,
Concealed in her caress!

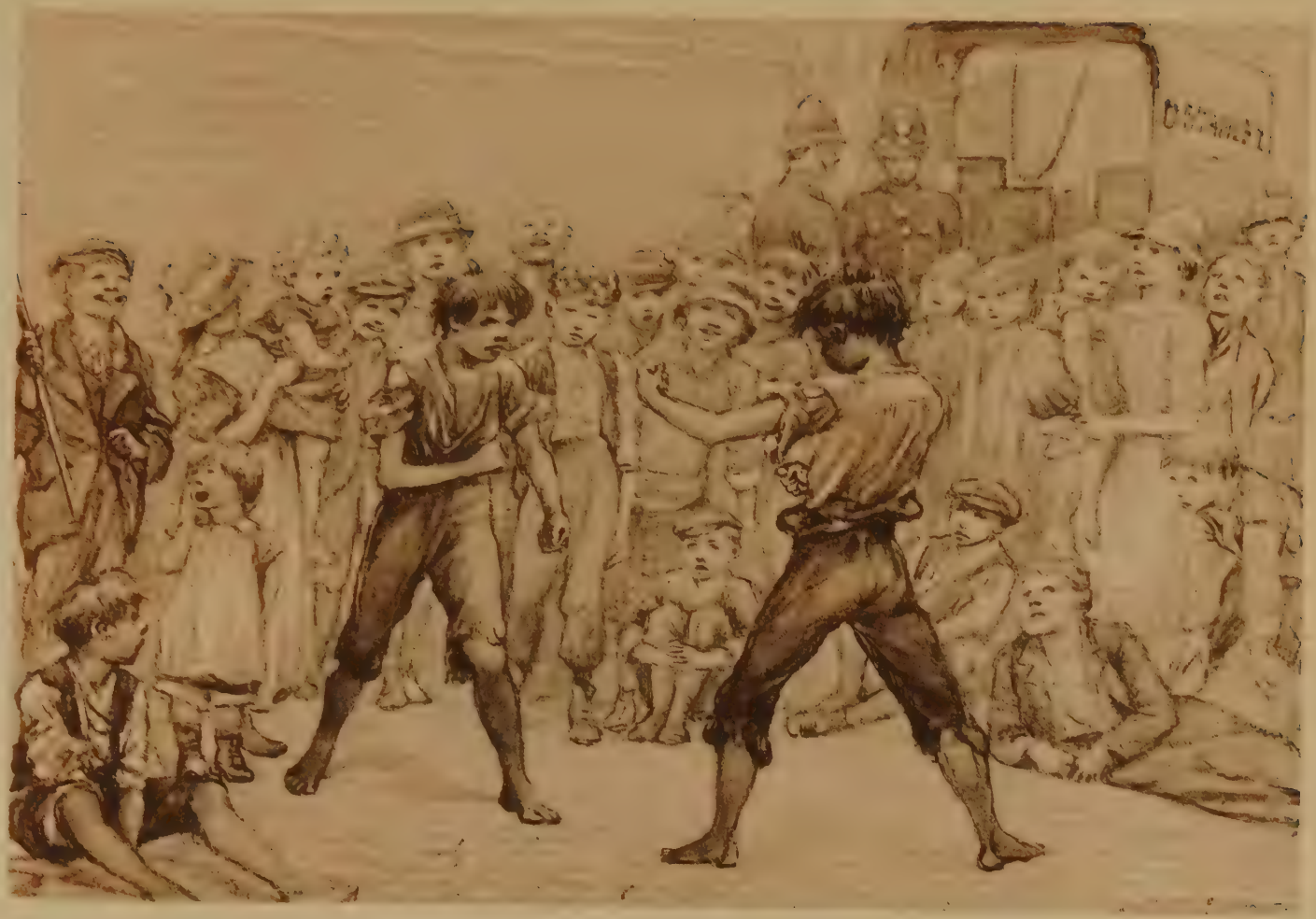
The tears are dried, the pain has flown,
The child refused to stay.
The mother, forgotten and left alone,
Just smiled to see him play.

BOYS FIGHTING

THEY have to fight it out, you see,
There is no other way.
Tom knew he never could be free,
To run about and play,
Until he made that fellow squeal
And got him, once for all, to feel
That he had lost the day.

But Bert intends to hold his own,
To beat Tom black and blue;
That cheeky fellow must be shown
What a plucky chap can do.
So he'll lay him low with a terrible whack,
Right there in the gutter, on his back;
"Have mercy," he shall moan!

And now you ask, Who won the day?—
Though the fight has just begun,
Perhaps they will have to fly away
Before the battle's won.
For this is right in the policeman's beat,
And he won't have fighting here in the street;
So the boys may have to run.



CHILDREN DANCING

A RONDEAU

OH ! lovely sight when children dance,
In careless free exuberance ;
Backwards and forwards, hands on hip,
Twirling around or lightly skip.
The boys like ponies trot and prance,
Laugh at the girls as they advance
With parted lips and radiant glance.
Oh! lovely sight!

The joy of movement they enhance,
With shouts and laughter that entrance.
Like swallows they curvet and dip,
The other swallows to out-strip.
Oh! Youth so full of radiance!
Oh ! lovely sight !

Dorothy Stanley 1926

TWO A PENNY

SHE sat beside a tray of fruit,
Piled up in golden ranges;
And every passer she'd salute
With "Buy my sweet oranges!"

"Two for a penny is not dear,
I make no extra charge;
One penny you can surely spare
For fruit so fine and large."

Two children came with eager eyes,
Longing for fruits like these,
Oranges straight from Paradise
Or the Hesperides.

Tattered pockets were searched in vain;
Impossible to pay.
And after groping once again,
They sadly turned away.

So Fate displays, to tantalize,
The things we would acquire;
And then invariably denies,
The fruits we most desire.

D. STANLEY

MOTHER AND BABE

HE'S all her own, her very own!
His arms about her cling,
And hers entwined make him a throne;
Her precious baby-king!

What treasure can compare with him!
What painter with his brush
Could ever show such rounded limb,
Or paint so sweet a flush!

The greatest sculptor ever known,
Could not mould forms like this;
A wondrous treasure, all her own,
To comfort and to kiss!

Oh, helpless babe, whose weakness holds
Such power to enthral;
And by that helplessness upholds
His kingship over all!

1923

d

YOUNG GYMNASTS

BOY upon boy, impressive pile,
For they are strong, though juvenile!
And yet, the under-chap must feel
An added weight would make him reel.
One may believe in 'Laissez-faire',
But more he really could not bear.
So were another boy to come,
Young Atlas no doubt would succumb;
For then the little acrobat
Would crumple up and go down flat!

Stanley Spencer . 1924

FLYING BABY

HIGH and still higher—up you go!
Up to the great blue deep;
Where fleecy clouds, serene and slow
Across the heavens sweep.

On cloud piles you may rest awhile,
Then try a further flight.
For babes, sufficiently agile,
Flying is sheer delight.

But if you are afraid at all,
Then you may find it best
To spread your arms and gently fall,
Upon your mother's breast.

Dorothy Stanley.
1925

THE ARAB RACE

A RACE! A race! A wonderful race!
Each one has an Arab ſteed;
The jockeys ſtick on, and don't mind the pace,
For they're babies trained to speed.

The Arabs are pulling for all they are worth;
Their trousers are worn to shreds,
The crowd is yelling in eager mirth,
As it watches their ſtraining heads.

It is neck and neck as they dash up the ſtreet;
Their hands and knees do bleed.
Both are bent on winning, for both are fleet;
Will the firſt one keep the lead?

It is hard to say, with Arabs like these,
And jockeys who keep their seat;
But it's seldom you see a race on knees;
It might really be called a feat!

THE ANGLERS

THE very best sport for the kiddies, is to fish in a stagnant pool;
Or an old canal, for preference, because there you find, as a rule,
The most remarkable catches, which you have to pull up by degrees;
Sort of things you never expected, and you land them with perfect ease.

You don't have to wait for the May fly, you may fish whenever you care;
You can draw up a dead rat or kitten, right out of its weedy lair;
Or a good block of wood comes floating, just like a big trout on the rise.
It's the finest of sports for the kiddies and full of most thrilling surprise.

And sometimes, if you lean well over, you can reach with your finger-tips
The dark and mysterious water, and watch as it drips and drips;
But the strangest thing of all, is to see, in certain places,
Look up at you and laugh at you, a row of small boys' faces!

FOX, HEN AND CHICKENS

WHEN boys play Fox and girls play Hen,
And all the rest are Chicks,
The girl has an anxious time, for then
The boy is up to tricks.

He dodges about, then dashes round,
And before the Hen can turn,
He catches a Chick in a leap and a bound,
And is ready to return.

The girl begins with a challenging laugh,
Till under her very eye,
She sees her Chickens reduced to half.
Then, of course, she is ready to cry.

For her dress is torn, quite past repair,
She feels she has had enough,
So she shouts with a very much injured air,
"Those boys are always so rough!"

Then the boy dances round and loudly jeers
That she wasn't a Hen—but a Goose!
And he tells her straight, with man-like sneers,
That "girls are no sort of use!"

KING BABY

THE Child comes reeling on his way,
Drunk with a wine that maketh gay,
His first deep draught of Life's red wine;
Immortal Vintage! Drink sublime!

His subjects, kneeling at his feet,
Are always ready there to meet
His every wish, but cannot see
His greatest wish is to be free

To walk alone, without a hand;
Alone, to explore this wonderland,
To have a language all his own,
And freedom hitherto unknown.

But when he's tired of being free,
He'll climb upon his mother's knee;
In meditation suck his thumb,
Until by sleep he's over-come.

KISS IN THE RING

SEE them dancing hand in hand,
Smiling, laughing as they go:
Joyous children, happy band,
Bounding, care-free, to and fro.
Sing in a ring,
Kiss as you sing,
Caught with a kiss,
Seldom you miss;
Then round again with a shout!

Are they Fairies, Flames or Flowers?
Are they small Stars, rolling fast?
Are they Sun Rays, Golden Showers?
Or bright Comets flashing past?
Better, by far,
Children they are.
With faces bright,
And footsteps light,
They are Fairies, Flames and Flowers!

Dorothy Stanley - 1926

DOWN AND OUT

HE needs a steady eye and hand,
And every boy that plays
At tops must quickly understand
Where his advantage lays.

The finest players in a match
Have played for years and years;
It's worth while watching them dispatch
A new boy, who appears

And thinks that he can win with ease;
That none can beat his aim;
And means the championship to seize,
And win a street-wide fame!

But his bright dreams soon fade away,
There's none but self to blame;
For now he sees with some dismay,
That he has lost the game.

In vain he lashes with his whip,
The top is down and out!
While he looks on with quivering lip,
And hears opponents shout.

Dorothy Stanley 1926

LITTLE BOY'S PRAYER

A HUMBLE room, a little bed,
With rough-hewn rafters overhead;
And by his mother's knee
A little child with solemn air,
Eyes closed, hands folded, deep in prayer,
Asks God that "he may be
"A real good boy. Bless Father, Mother,
"And all kind friends, and Baby Brother;
"But, most of all, bless ME."

THE CHASE OF RAGAMUFFINS

RUN, boys, run, for the Cops have just begun
To chase you like rabbits down the street.
But the pace cannot last, for the boys are running fast,
And the Police are not so nimble on their feet.

You hadn't got a scratch, for you'd just begun the match;
Your coats were in a heap, and your shirt
Sleeves were rolled up tight, as you stepped into the fight,
When a policeman nearly threw you in the dirt.

You thought the coast was clear, for you did not seem to hear
The stern tramp, tramp of the LAW!
But if you get away, you may fight another day;
Only keep a better look out than before.

MOTHER-LOVE

A MOTHER parting with her child,
The image of despair;
Close to her breast
The babe is prest;
'Tis more than she can bear!

Another one will tend him now,
And learn his baby wiles;
Hush him to sleep,
Or, if he weep,
Win back his lovely smiles.

Ah! Cruel want and cruel wrong,
To break a woman's heart;
First to entice
To Paradise;
Then tear those two apart!

Dorothy Stanley · 1924 ·

THE SICK CHILD

THERE is no cradle like the enfolding arms ;
No light to equal comprehending eyes,
Whose subtle tenderness soothes all alarms,
And hushes sighs.

The child looks up, searching his mother's face,
His fevered limbs resting upon her knees ;
The hurried pulses quiet down their pace,
He has found ease.

So may we find in Death a kindly Mother,
And yield ourselves to her without a sigh ;
Her arms our cradle, we would have no other ;
And thus to die !

BANK HOLIDAY

OH, jolly day,
Bank Holiday !
It is a day of days,
When, if you wish,
You go and fish,
Or lie about and laze.
And in the heat,
It's very sweet
To kick off both your shoes ;
Lie in cool shades,
With pretty maids,
Or anyone you choose.

Some boys do Wheels,
Some head o'er heels,
Others dance round and round.
Thus, to and fro,
In joys o'er flow,
They skip about and bound.
Oh! passing days,
Bank Holidays,
When Life's dream was so fair!
Later, you wake,
And have to take
Life's daily load of care.

Dorothy O'Farley. 1925

THE WHEEL

A BALLADE

A BEAUTIFUL sight is a well turned Wheel
Of rapidly whirling hands and feet;
But a number of turning boys make you feel
That most of them soon will be dead-beat.
It's a test of endurance, and no small feat
To twist that way, in revolving flight,
At break-neck speed, the whole length of the street.
The Wheel well turned is a beautiful sight.

The Ragamuffin makes a special appeal,
In his shabby old trousers well patched in the seat,
His raggety coat and his little black heel,
His face all begrimed with the mud of street;
And yet, for all that, he is perfectly sweet,
With pearl teeth, jewel eyes, remarkably bright;
And, take him all round, he's a first-rate athlete.
The Wheel well turned is a beautiful sight.

ENVOY

The most ragged street urchin knows and can feel,
The strong beating pulse of youthful delight.
He can dance, he can sing, and go head over heel.
The Wheel well turned is a beautiful sight.

MARBLES

GIVE any ball to any boy,
And watch him at the game.
Note the keen eye, the silent joy,
As he takes steady aim.

The well flung snowball, crashing white
Against a neighbour's wall;
The tight-laced football, kicked aright,
The well-aimed cricket ball.
These played with skill may lead to fame,
And bring a ragamuffin's name
To such renown, it should incite
The other boys to think they might
All do the same.

Then marbles, as a game of skill,
Should hold a worthy place:
Just watch the champion, calm and still,
With well-aimed throw, displace
The marbles in a sheltered ring,
And scatter with a dextrous swing,
Causing them all to fly like rockets,
The winner filling up his pockets;
Believe me, no small thing!

'Tis no small thing, this skilled renown;
For, since the Olympic games,
The glory of a laurel crown
Sets all young hearts in flames.

Give any ball to any boy,
Note the keen eye, the silent joy,
The steady aim, the perfect ease;
And, if he's victor, the increase
Of self-esteem.

Dorothy Stanley 1926

THE PLANE TREE IN A LONDON PARK

THE Plane tree waves its leafless boughs,
And sheds its grimy bark,
Grieving that Nature oft allows
Trees growing in the Park
To wear a mantle of rich bloom,
And heavy weight of fruit,
While the sad Plane tree lives in gloom,
With fruit and flower of soot.

The Gods who hear the plaintive trees,
Noted the sorrowing cry ;
And bade the gentle evening breeze,
Go say the Gods would try
To let the Plane know, for one hour,
Joys hitherto unknown ;
The tree to bear both fruit and flower,
The fairest ever grown.

Then joyous shouts of youthful glee,
And rush of little feet ;
Children come scrambling up the tree,
And hang like blossoms sweet ;
Or, pendant from each wintry bough,
Most lovely rosy fruit.
Thus the compassionate Gods endow
The Plane tree, and transmute
Bare, leafless branches, for one hour,
To boughs weighed down with fruit and flower !